



**Tom Barrett**  
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

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**BARRETT ISSUES VETOES IN 2007 CITY BUDGET**  
***Mayor upholds promise to use taxpayer dollars responsibly, creates recommended funding source for MPS School Safety Pilot Program***

MILWAUKEE – Mayor Tom Barrett today sent the 2007 City Budget back to the Common Council with a veto of the Council's action to increase the number of firefighters on three ladder trucks. In the Mayor's 2007 Executive Proposed Budget, a staffing reduction was made on eight of 16 ladder trucks from five firefighters to four. During Council deliberation of the Proposed Budget, Aldermen increased the number of ladder trucks with five firefighters from eight to 11 at an additional cost of \$608,120 using previously unrecognized revenue from the City Comptroller.

"The staffing reduction I proposed in my Executive Budget was a carefully thought-out, fact-based strategic decision that will not result in any firefighter layoffs or have any adverse effect on response times, firefighter safety, or the ability of the Fire Department to fulfill its core mission," said Mayor Barrett.

Barrett continued, "Absolutely no policy-based argument has been made for the Council decision to add back these positions. For this reason, I ask the Council to sustain my veto and support a staffing level for the Department that protects both the interests of the taxpayers and the need to maintain a high level of public safety services."

If the veto is sustained, Barrett has recommended that the Council establish a funding level of \$300,000 to be added to the City's Contingent Fund to be reserved for a pilot program to address school security at MPS high schools. The initiative will involve police officers patrolling a specific cluster of schools as well as having officers work directly with school personnel. The initiative would operate under a cost-sharing agreement between the City and MPS.

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The idea for the pilot program grew out of recent meetings held between Mayor Barrett, Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent William Andrekopolous and Milwaukee Police Chief Nan Hegerty after the Mayor's budget had been proposed and Council deliberation had begun. If the Council sustains the veto and adopts this recommendation by the Mayor, an expansion of the program will be possible in the 2007-2008 school year.

Barrett has recommended that the balance of the funds, roughly \$308,000, be returned to the taxpayers in the form of a reduction to the property tax levy. This would establish a final tax levy of \$219,770,828 for 2007 and a tax rate of \$7.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

"This is not a debate between firefighters and police officers, it is a question of priorities," Barrett continued. "The staffing reduction proposed in my budget was based on recommendations from a study the Council commissioned as well as a review of industry standards and the current practices of similarly-sized cities with comparable housing stock and population density."

"My recommendation to return additional revenue to the taxpayers and to pay for needed school security is one I hope the Council will consider and support," said Barrett.

*A copy of the Mayor's veto message to the Common Council is attached.*